

Summary of Feedback on Preliminary Alternatives

received as of Friday March 24, 2006

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1) Purpose and Explanation of this Summary

This is a summary of the comments received by the National Park Service (NPS) Winter Use Team in response to their request to be told of “Things that are missing from the preliminary Alternatives” and “Key Points in the Analysis that have been overlooked.” It is intended to show, in summary form, the range of comments received by the NPS. In cases where more than one comment made essentially the same point, we have consolidated them. We also list the questions participants asked during the plenary sessions of the Open Houses that were held in Bozeman and Jackson.

Some participants provided their comments specifically as “Things that are Missing ...” or as “Key Points in the Analysis” Others submitted comments without regard to these two categories. Some comments were categorized as if they were responding to the questions, but their content suggested that they were not in fact responses to the two questions.

We have categorized the comments received under the headings of the two questions asked by the NPS, and have added a section for “Other Comments Advocating or Opposing Specific Policies Relevant to Winter Use.” We have allocated the comments among these three main categories. In some cases we distributed parts of longer comments in more than one category depending on its content. We hope that this categorization of comments will be useful, and do not intend this system of categorization to indicate the relative importance of any comment.

Some comments appeared somewhat unclear or ambiguous, however we have not attempted to clarify these comments nor to resolve these ambiguities.

This summary does not attempt to evaluate whether comments provided as “Missing things” really are missing from the Preliminary Alternatives, nor

whether any comments proposed as “Key Points in the Analysis” are “Key Points” or have indeed been “Overlooked.”

Some of the comments received were very substantial and the format of this summary cannot adequately present them. Nevertheless as NPS winter use team let participants know, all distinct and substantive feedback forms received by the team will be included in the administrative record, as will this Summary.

2) Things that Commenters said are Missing from the Preliminary Alternatives

a) Preliminary Alternative 1: Continue Temporary Plan

Modify this Preliminary Alternative so that 15% is unguided with an obligatory training course and Best Available Technology (BAT) machines.

Consider air quality impacts in this Preliminary Alternative.

Consider animal habitat impacts in this Preliminary Alternative.

Sylvan Pass should have an option for “open with avalanche control” similar to the snowmobile trails used in avalanche areas within U.S. Forest Service (USFS) jurisdiction.

Permit non-BAT machines in Grand Teton and the Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail (CDST).

b) Preliminary Alternative 2: Snowcoaches Only

Include “No grooming” in this Preliminary Alternative, as properly operated snowcoaches will not require groomed roads.

c) Preliminary Alternative 3: Eliminate Most Road Grooming

No comments were received that referred specifically and uniquely to this Preliminary Alternative.

d) Preliminary Alternative 4: Expand Recreational Use

No comments were received that referred specifically and uniquely to this Preliminary Alternative.

e) Preliminary Alternative 5: Unguided Access

No comments were received that referred specifically and uniquely to this Preliminary Alternative.

f) Preliminary Alternative 6: Mixed Use

Confusion between the terms used in the PowerPoint presentation and in the hand-out: one specifies BAT snowmobiles, the other “current BAT or better.”

This should clarify whether or not trail heads and “pull-outs” will be plowed.

This should clarify which guide permits will be allowed on plowed roads.

This should include a limit on the number of wheeled vehicles and BAT or equivalent.

g) Commenters’ “Missing things” not referenced to any single Preliminary Alternative

i) Historic numbers/Historic Use

Any Preliminary Alternative should be based on historic numbers.

The Preliminary Alternatives should maintain visitation levels experienced in the 1990s. All these Preliminary Alternatives need more snowcoaches.

The Preliminary Alternatives should include sufficient Over-Snow Vehicle (OSV) seats to accommodate historic demand from guests at Big Sky. This requires that two snowcoach companies be permitted in Big Sky.

The term “historic use” in reference to snowmobiles is a misnomer because historically there were no snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park.

ii) Guiding

Final Alternatives in the Draft EIS should include snowmobile visitation that is commercially guided, non-commercially guided and unguided.

Unguided snowmobile access should be excluded from all Preliminary Alternatives. All analysis shows that guiding reduces impacts on wildlife and on other visitors.

50% of people should be allowed to enter unguided.

A high proportion of unguided access should be allowed, and the required number of guides should be maintained.

iii) Snowmobile Access to Specific Sites/Routes

At least one Preliminary Alternative should continue to allow snowmobile access to all of the side roads.

North Rim of Grand Canyon should be open to snowmobiles in the afternoon (similar to the arrangement at Firehole Canyon drive).

CDST should not be closed in any Preliminary Alternative.

CDST should be closed in every Preliminary Alternative.

Extension of the BAT requirements to the CDST would increase uncertainty and confusion for users of the CDST, park visitors, gateway communities and local businesses.

East Entrance should remain open with sufficient number of daily entrants to support the viable operation of service providers.

Sylvan Pass Road should be closed in all Preliminary Alternatives because of disruption caused by avalanche control and the small amount of East Entrance traffic.

iv) Best Available Technology (BAT)

Access for non-BAT snowmobiles within Grand Teton and the Parkway must be considered in these preliminary Alternatives.

To better utilize a percentage of the 50 to 75 snowmobiles allowed on the CDST under various Preliminary Alternatives, require that 50%-80% of snowmobile use on the CDST be restricted to BAT snowmobiles with a commercial guide provided by outfitters/companies with permits for adjacent National Forests as well as for Yellowstone NP.

Include Preliminary Alternatives that allow non-BAT snowmobiles on CDST.

Include Preliminary Alternative(s) that permit 20%-50% of snowmobiles on the CDST to be non-BAT and to be unguided or non-commercially guided.

Where non-BAT snowmobiles are allowed access, they should be defined as 2006 model-year or newer so as to bring into effect the EPA Tier I regulations and to preclude pre-regulation models of snowmobile.

Allow 100% of snowmobile use of Jackson Lake for fishing access to be non-BAT.

Non-BAT snowmobiles should be allowed on Grassy Lake Road in every Preliminary Alternative without any restriction as to model-year because this is a connector to National Forest Lands.

Preliminary Alternatives should consider imposing BAT requirements on snowcoaches.

All Preliminary Alternatives must apply BAT to all vehicles. This includes a phase-in of BAT snowcoaches. Older snowcoaches can be converted to BAT.

Re-define BAT to include emissions goals and to encourage further improvements.

Eliminate grandfathering for employees' non-BAT machines.

In “Actions Common Across All Alternatives”, specify the use of environmentally preferred, domestically produced fuels and lubricants for all motorized winter vehicles. This would include lubricants meeting the EPA “highly biodegradable” classification and fuels such as biodiesel and ethanol blends.

Consider phasing-in BAT machines over time.

No Preliminary Alternative should include 2-stroke snowmobiles in the Parks.

v) Snowcoaches

There is no Preliminary Alternative that includes both snowmobiles and snowcoaches and that emphasizes snowcoaches (the environmentally preferred transportation mode). Earlier EISs have emphasized the transportation mode that allowed full visitation while providing greatest protection to all resources, and included support to spur snowcoach visitation. Such measures should be considered in one or more Alternatives.

Including caps on snowcoaches in the Preliminary Alternatives that include both snowcoaches and snowmobiles may actually discourage full use of the environmentally preferred mode of motorized visitation (snowcoaches).

vi) Economic Impacts

Preliminary Alternatives should acknowledge that NPS is not responsible for the financial viability of outfitters, guides, etc in the gateway communities.

Preliminary Alternatives should permit discussion of the impact of the Park’s decision on all relevant industries, not just snowmobiles (e.g. snowcoach, ski, and snowshoe).

vii) Plowing

Preliminary Alternatives should consider plowing in place of grooming (if the cost is commensurate).

Preliminary Alternatives should not consider plowing. Plowing will result in access to hazardous roads with increased likelihood of collisions with wildlife, sand accumulation on roads and in streams, and an additional burden on the NPS budget.

The challenge of plowing to keep roads open and safe in major snow events would provide less predictable access.

If the weather produces a shortened snow season, snowcoaches can easily be converted to wheeled access providing ample flexibility.

viii) Non-Motorized Use

Preliminary Alternatives should consider increased non-polluting alternatives such as cross-country skiing, and move away from motorized OSVs with specific ski trails, a hut system and access.

Preliminary Alternatives should consider groomed trails along Moose-Wilson Road and a more focused look at supporting cross-country and skate skiing as ways to see the Parks.

Consider outlining a grooming program for the Inner Park Road for use by skiers. (Current grooming is too sporadic to be useful.)

Non-motorized access should be facilitated by providing shuttle services at many stops.

At least one Preliminary Alternative should be closed to oversnow vehicles and open only to skiers and snowshoers.

ix) Timing of Access Periods

Provide for noise-free periods in specific locations (especially Old Faithful) e.g. one day every two weeks, reserved for cross-country skiers, skate skiers, snow shoers and other foot traffic.

Consider a “No snowmobile” time

Alternate months within alternating years for motorized and non-motorized use.

Increase the winter season by eliminating administrative travel.

Completely close the park to travel when severe winter conditions exist.

Provide roads groomed only for skiers for specific periods.

Consider off-season/shoulder-season allotments for photographers, skiers etc.

The Park should be closed at sunset except for those staying overnight.

Consider a Preliminary Alternative for “Park Closed in Winter” (like the old days).

x) Number of Permitted Snowmobiles

In order to comply with NEPA and provide a comparison with the status quo, the DEIS should include an Alternative that reflects conditions in the past three winters with roughly 250 snowmobiles per day.

All previous NPS studies determined that even limited numbers of BAT snowmobiles interfere with visitor enjoyment. 200 BAT snowmobiles chronically exceed the Park’s noise thresholds.

The NPS should not consider Alternatives that allow for snowmobile numbers that exceed NPS thresholds and legal mandates to protect park resources, visitor health and safety.

Exclude any Preliminary Alternative with high levels of toxic pollutants such as results from more than 720 snowmobiles.

Include a Preliminary Alternative with mostly snowcoaches and a few (100 or so) snowmobiles.

Current/actual use should reflect current actual numbers.

An allowance for slightly higher peak days should be considered as an alternative to raising daily allowances.

Allow day-to-day flexibility of access numbers within total limits.

Snowmobile fuel should be limited to one gallon per day per machine.

When noise thresholds are routinely exceeded with 200 snowmobiles, NPS should not be considering Proposed Alternatives with snowmobile daily entrances above this number.

Consider a Preliminary Alternative for no motorized use at all.

Consider a Preliminary Alternative that slowly phases down the number of permitted snowmobiles.

xi) Adaptive Management

The list of Preliminary Alternatives includes only one alternative designed to meet the Adaptive Management Thresholds. There is now plenty of information to predict the ability of various alternatives to meet NPS mandates. This EIS has the opportunity to design an alternative that allows both snowmobiles and snowcoaches while complying with the threshold and meeting NPS mandates for resource protection. Include an Alternative that limits the number of winter vehicles to a level likely to comply with the Thresholds. Ideally this Alternative would accommodate historic levels of seasonal use, while allowing two modes of oversnow motorized visitation. Meeting the Thresholds in such an Alternative may require additional management of entrance numbers or of timing, as well as active management of concentration areas.

There is no Preliminary Alternative with a number of snowmobiles small enough to meet NPS's adaptive management thresholds.

Integrate adaptive management into the Preliminary Alternatives so NPS can respond to monitoring.

Include only Preliminary Alternatives that fully protect the resources of the Parks. Some preliminary alternatives would not meet protective thresholds.

xii) Other

Specify long-term monitoring in the Preliminary Alternatives

NPS should clearly identify the environmentally preferred Preliminary Alternative.

The Preliminary Alternatives lack a clear vision of carrying out the Organic Act.

Codify etiquette for motorized traffic and for skiers as available in USFS.

Snowplane use on Jackson Lake was not considered in any Preliminary Alternative.

Preliminary Alternatives should reflect 2002 Executive Order to promote physical fitness.

Include as “Actions common across alternatives” that the Mammoth – North East Entrance road is open and plowed and provides winter use recreational opportunities.

Include a “no action” Preliminary Alternative that reflects the situation prior to the lawsuit decisions, because the current situation is only “temporary” and cannot be considered the “no action” alternative.

All these Preliminary Alternatives are missing a realistic assessment of impacts to park resources: noise, air quality, and wildlife disturbance. Each Preliminary Alternative should provide indication of comparative emission and noise pollution impacts.

Put more emphasis on what is good for the wildlife in the park, instead of for the people. Respect the needs of the environment more.

Preliminary Alternatives should consider a reservation system with low limits on access.

The intrinsic value of peace and quiet is missing from these Preliminary Alternatives.

Combine Preliminary Alternative 2 with Preliminary Alternative 6 to eliminate snowmobile use and gradually expand the study of motorized use to explore the impacts of summer motorized traffic.

These Preliminary Alternatives are too limited. Think bigger. Be bold and visionary for future generations.

Exclude any Preliminary Alternative that results in wildlife displacement.

Exclude any Preliminary Alternative that requires employees to wear ear protection.

Exclude any Preliminary Alternative that allows toxic levels of air pollutants.

Select a single title for these Alternatives: either “Emerging” or “Preliminary.”

3) Key Points in the Analysis that Commenters said have been Overlooked

a) Wildlife

The Wildlife Report has a number of potential problems. It includes a number of conclusions for which there is no stated methodology. Its conclusions are largely unqualified by conflicting findings in this study from other studies, and are unqualified by the limitations of the methodology.

Compare the flight/disturbance response of elk, bison, and wolves to skiers/hikers/snow-shoers with their response to motorized OSVs.

Compare wolf depredations on winter ungulate population with ungulate losses due to motorized winter use.

Analyze the impact of sound and pollution on biodiversity.

Consider the impact of each Preliminary Alternative on wildlife.

b) Other Environmental Impacts

Analysis should focus on the Park's natural resources.

Greenhouse gas emissions should be considered in each Preliminary Alternative.

This has been analyzed enough to determine that snowmobiles are detrimental to this environment. Don't waste any more time or money on this.

Previous studies, showing that more protection is needed, seem to be overlooked here. Science has shown that fewer snowmobiles and more snow coaches are better.

Include analysis of heavy metal deposition from winter exhaust.

Consider long-term and short-term environmental costs.

The preservation of the Park has been overlooked in all Preliminary Alternatives but 2 and 3.

Would reducing the number of winter access days decrease the general impact?

How much impact information is available for maximum levels of use?
Average use now, except for the periods around major holidays, is only about 25%-50% of current maximums.

c) Economic impacts

The impact of these Preliminary Alternatives on neighboring communities is not addressed.

Consider the ways that changed regulations alter patterns of demand: while some will stop coming, others will start to come. Can increases in demand be considered as well as decreases?

How can NPS's considerations of the Preliminary Alternatives not be influenced by concerns for increasing profit?

Analyze the cost of keeping the Sylvan Pass road safe and of plowing the west side roads. The disruption to the park and the costs of keeping Sylvan Pass open are not worth it.

Analysis should include study of the economic impacts of reducing or eliminating snowmobiles in the park resulting in diversification of winter recreational activity and potential increases in cross-country skiing, skate skiing, snow-shoeing and use of snowcoaches.

Analysis should include the availability of places other than Yellowstone National Park (YNP) for West Yellowstone visitors to take snowmobiles.

Analysis should address the increased cost of entering the Park if guides must be used (this is why so few sleds are going in).

Consider the cost to the NPS of maintaining abundant snowmobile access.

Snow grooming and plowing costs should be closely examined.

The impact on guided snowmobile businesses of allowing access to unguided snowmobiles should be addressed.

d) Energy Use

There needs to be an analytical comparison between the per capita fuel use of snowmobiles and snowcoaches. The analysis should include the comparative fuel requirements of carrying luggage.

There needs to be an inquiry into the use of alternative fuels that treats this issue as equally significant as air emissions and noise levels.

e) Guiding

The benefits of guiding for enforcement must be stressed.

Consider use of on-line certification to address the issue of non-guided and non-commercial-guided options.

Specify plans for enforcement if non-guided snowmobiles are permitted.

NPS studied the value of guiding and reached the unequivocal conclusion that it is fundamental to mitigating adverse impact. There is no new information to justify including two Preliminary Alternatives that allow unguided or non-commercially guided snowmobiling.

f) Best Available Technology (BAT)

A majority of snowmobiles certified as BAT and approved for use in Yellowstone are emitting significantly more carbon monoxide than previous modeling assumed.

Analysis needs to deal with shortcomings of current BAT.

g) Non-Motorized Use

Consider a trail system for non-motorized users.

Consider the impact of motorized use on non-motorized use of the Park.

h) Snowcoaches

Ensure that Preliminary Alternative 2 is not artificially limited by the cap on snowcoaches. This cap should be high enough to allow historic levels of visitation. Given that previous modeling for winter use has not included BAT snowcoaches, it would be expected that significantly more snowcoaches could be allowed while meeting the thresholds.

Emissions monitoring shows that newer model snowcoaches are cleaner than previously assumed.

We have spent \$1.6 million and failed to find a snowcoach track system that works, so we need to consider more snowmobiles.

Large heavy snowcoaches make deep ruts creating difficult conditions for snowmobiles.

Large snowcoaches have difficulty passing each other on some roads, and have difficulty maneuvering around wildlife.

Large snowcoaches, which are prone to break-downs, have very heavy components that are dangerous to replace out on the road.

Getting a big snowcoach back on the road after it has gone off into soft snow would require very heavy equipment.

Some snowcoaches have very high centers of gravity. This makes them prone to roll-over. NPS should consider setting standards for this.

Large snowcoaches with Grip Track units appear to be prone to oscillation of the front tracks. This will result in tie-rod fatigue and the possibility of an injury accident.

Fuel economy in large snowcoaches is 1-3 m.p.g. In old Bombardiers or Matt Track vans fuel consumption can be 6-8 m.p.g.

NPS needs to put a size limit on snowcoaches.

i) Laws and Standards Influencing the Plan

The decision to close Sylvan Pass Road should be based on NPS non-impairment and other organic act mandates.

Do not allow any erosion of the NPS mission.

Preliminary Alternatives include snowmobile access in numbers that exceed the levels that are known to already exceed the adaptive management thresholds designed to ensure no impairment.

Refer to NPS Management Policies Chapter 6 and NPS Director's Order 41 3d(iv) "Land identified as suitable for wilderness designation, wilderness study areas, proposed wilderness and recommended wilderness will be managed to preserve their wilderness character and values undiminished until Congress acts on the recommendations." Of the Preliminary Alternatives, only Preliminary Alternative 2 may fulfill these NPS policies.

J192 test procedure for assessment of snowmobile noise is inapplicable in the Park because in the Park's speed limit machines are never run at full throttle as is specified in J192. Sound tests should be conducted based on real speed use.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) needs to be considered in such a way as not to increase costs of recreation.

ADA snowcoaches should be available.

The analysis should include a discussion of how recreational snowmobiling conflicts with the NPS mission to conserve the Park's resources.

j) Winter Use and Summer Use Inconsistencies

The Winter Use plans are inconsistent with summer use. Noisy and smelly vehicles should also be excluded in the summer.

Winter use plans must be considered in light of summer use impacts. How significant are winter use air quality impacts compared to summer use?

If sound is a problem, what about Harleys and diesels in summer?

Compared to summer traffic and noise, the only thing snowmobiles leave are tracks, and they melt away.

k) Soundscapes and Air Quality

Establish specific standards for noise and air quality, and monitor them.

More consideration is needed for the protection of this Class I Airshed.

Include analysis of emissions per vehicle/passenger/mile.

Use a standardized "per capita" basis for describing environmental consequences of each Preliminary Alternative.

Analysis should be clear that pollution measurements are based on actual motorized usage, not the allowed usage.

How has snowmobile emissions affected air quality in the vicinity of the West Yellowstone entrance gate?

The Temporary Winter Use EA weakened the Adaptive Management Thresholds for soundscapes without rationale and without indicating the data that led to this change. The original 2003 soundscape Threshold should be restored for this analysis of long-term winter use. The EA indicates that the soundscape thresholds could be violated on most or all high visitation days without technically exceeding the Threshold. The temporary Threshold is not designed to be equivalent to the level of protection provided by the environmentally preferred alternative as required by NPS policy.

In the Draft Air Quality Report, monitored pollution levels are not compared to the air quality Adaptive Management Thresholds. The Final Report and the Draft EIS should include such a comparison.

The analysis of impacts for soundscapes, air quality and wildlife should include administrative vehicle use (NPS and concessionaires) as well as visitor use.

Monitor sound levels within the 5-mile radius of snowcoach drop-points. This is the limit of skiing and snow-shoe use.

The analysis needs to recognize that improvements in air quality and soundscape are due to smaller number of snowmobiles entering the park (~250/day) than currently allowed (750/day). Even in this situation limits for noise levels have been exceeded by snowmobiles in several locations according to recent NPS studies.

Provide documentation on the extent to which reduced snowmobile visitation and use of BAT is decreasing air pollution and reducing noise impacts.

NPS should not consider allowing increases of snowmobile access above 720 when its own studies show serious health concerns at that number. The current numbers are reducing air quality impacts.

I) Other

Finding a common ground for skiers/snowshoers and snowmobilers, emphasizing what we all share.

The tide of public input has been consistently and overwhelmingly in favor of the snowcoach-only alternative. This should be reflected in the DEIS.

Take account of safety considerations for snowmobilers on the CDST in Grand Teton National Park where they are located beside the roadway for cars and trucks.

The experience of the public that use the park should be surveyed and considered as part of the analysis. A scientific study of park visitor

feedback is needed for a valid evaluation of the effect of the Plan on winter visitors.

Reference to “historic use” should not be applied to snowmobiles. Historically there were no snowmobiles in YNP.

In the socio-economic analysis of Preliminary Alternative 2, reflect the public’s trend toward the use of snowcoaches instead of snowmobiles.

Rely on the scientific record to refine the range of alternatives for the draft EIS.

No explanation of why private cars are excluded from plowed roads. If unguided snowmobiles are allowed on the groomed roads why are unguided cars not allowed on the plowed roads?

Encourage non-traditional means of access.

Explore the potential for a tour district with local communities to ensure visitor satisfaction with snowcoaches.

Analyze the winter opening of the Beartooth Highway from Pilot Creek to the North East Entrance.

The effect on Grand Teton National Park of the use of non-BAT snowmobiles in the Park and on the CDST.

Explore a “mass transit” theory, with NPS managing and subsidizing snowcoaches. Expand this provision of “mass transit” to summer use and reduce/manage motorized recreational use in Yellowstone year-round. Consider ending OSVs and plowing to permit use of mass transit and green technology.

The analysis needs to include a prioritization of goals and values for the Winter Use Plan to achieve.

Quantify the “quality of visit” experience for non-snowmobilers.

Include a thorough assessment of the impacts of plowing more roads in the Park.

The NPS analysis should be explicit that “we have to do what Norton and now Kempthorne tell us.”

The numbers of permitted OSVs in the range of Preliminary Alternatives should not be arbitrary but should be developed based on understandings of safe limits of pollution and an allocation of those pollution limits between sources. Because snowmobiles produce more pollution per person than snowcoaches, this would tend to reduce visitation numbers as snowmobile numbers are increased.

Take account of administrative road plowing.

How can your analysis avoid the double standards prevalent in Yellowstone policy that snowmobiles are bad and coaches are good?

How can your analysis permit independent snowmobilers?

Will your analysis oblige guides, drivers, private operators, and Park and other employees all to have the same permit?

4) Other comments advocating or opposing specific policies related to winter use

a) Reference to Specific Preliminary Alternatives

i) Preliminary Alternative 1

Support Preliminary Alternative 1.

ii) Preliminary Alternative 2

Support Preliminary Alternative 2.

Oppose Preliminary Alternative 2.

Support this Preliminary Alternative because it lets the park rest and recover during the winter from heavy summer use.

The specified snowcoach cap (50) would not allow historic visitation levels even if filled to 100% occupancy.

Support Preliminary Alternative 2 as long as NPS really enforces BAT.

The cap on snowcoaches should be removed or explained. If there is new information indicating a resource-driven need to limit snowcoach numbers, the permitted snowcoaches should be reduced.

This Preliminary Alternative seems precluded by your answer to the FAQ “Do you believe Snowmobiles are appropriate in YNP?” There you answered “Yes, under an appropriate regime.”

This Proposed Alternative should continue to be identified as the environmentally preferred alternative.

iii) Preliminary Alternative 3

Non-BAT snowmobiles should be allowed to operate on the CDST under this option.

This Preliminary Alternative should be missing from the list completely.

This alternative would cost our business a lot of clients and remove some major access to the interior.

iv) Preliminary Alternative 4

Support Preliminary Alternative 4.

Opposed to Preliminary Alternative 4.

Support Preliminary Alternative 4 and propose that unguided be increased to 50%

Decrease the percentage of commercially guided and increase the percentages of unguided and non-commercially guided, e.g. 50% commercial, 25% non-commercial and 25% unguided.

CDST should allow non-BAT in this Preliminary Alternative.

The title of this would be more accurate as “Expand Motorized Vehicle Use.” It would actually decrease the recreational use by groups who are deterred by the noise.

This permits too many snowmobiles and too much unguided use.

v) Preliminary Alternative 5

Support Preliminary Alternative 5.

Opposed to Preliminary Alternative 5.

Reference to “improved BAT” is confusing. All Preliminary Alternatives should refer simply to BAT.

Does NPS have the personnel to police this level of unguided use?

It seems inconsistent to cap snowcoach numbers from the West Entrance at current numbers but to allow for growth in snowmobile usage.

Proposed Alternative 5 seems to allow for most flexibility for visitors.

vi) Preliminary Alternative 6

Support Preliminary Alternative 6 if the Fall off-season is removed.

Support Preliminary Alternative 6 if personal vehicles are excluded and only buses and vans are permitted.

Preliminary Alternative 6 is worth considering

CDST, Grassy Lake Road, Sylvan Pass and Jackson Lake should remain open.

OSV and wheeled vehicles should include percentages of non-commercially guided and non-guided.

Either plow, or don't plow: mixture is a logistical nightmare.

This is promising because it provides access for large numbers of people.

Allow access to unguided vehicles from West Yellowstone to Old Faithful to increase skier traffic

b) Continued Environmental Impact Studies

Oppose the continued spending of federal funds for another study when the science and the people of the US have already declared a preference.

Why is NPS conducting another study when three have concluded that snowmobiles have a destructive impact on wildlife, workers and the environment?

c) Environmental Impact

I would like to see monitoring by a device that would measure how the noise made by a snowmobile affects a human's desire for a quiet wilderness experience.

Several of these Proposed Alternatives would only increase degrading impacts on the park and are an example of the Bush administration's fundamental philosophical shift in the way National Parks are managed: instead of managing for preservation for future generations they are managed for short-term, selfish purposes.

Do what is best for the ecosystem. Anything less is a disgrace.

d) Best Available Technology (BAT)

Snowmobiles coming into Grand Teton from Targhee should be BAT

Support BAT for all snowmobiles, and snowcoaches, including NPS employees' OSVs.

CDST should be a non-BAT route.

Grassy Lake Road should remain non-BAT.

What exactly is BAT? When is it determined and how is it enforced? Is the Government mandating or asking for continued development of BAT?

e) Guiding

Support unguided snowmobiles

Support guiding of snowmobiles

Support the guiding of snowmobiles to improve visitor safety. Apparently the woman who died was guided by a person who was too-casually licensed.

Support commercial guiding to protect wildlife from harassment and to keep snowmobiles on roads.

Instead of guiding, put speed governors on the machines.

f) Motorized Oversnow Vehicles (OSV)

Support the elimination of snowcoaches if snowmobiles are eliminated.

Support transition to snowcoaches and away from snowmobiles.

Support the protection of Yellowstone from snowmobiles

Support prohibition of snowmobiles.

Opposed to segregating the Park into areas open and closed to snowmobiles since snowmobiles meet air and sound standards.

Preliminary Alternatives that do not allow snowmobile access should not be considered.

How many employees have grandfathered non-conforming machines?

g) Grooming

Support grooming/packing major roads.

No additional roads should be plowed or groomed.

h) Economic Impact

Plowing the roads would have serious negative impact on West Yellowstone.

Current vendor contracts are uncompetitive: the process needs to be opened up. Open contracts are needed in West Yellowstone.

Public and concessionaires must be informed by fall 2006 that an additional “temporary use” year will come after the ROD to allow them to make vacation and operation plans that conform to the ROD.

Each restriction results in higher costs for recreation.

The highest visitation levels, with the lowest environmental impacts, are obtained by using snowcoaches. So snowcoaches have the most beneficial economic impact on gateway communities.

Using only snowcoaches reduces NPS costs for grooming, administration, enforcement, etc.

NPS is not mandated to subsidize local economics by paying to provide abundant snowmobile access.

Preferential treatment is given to special interest groups. Park policy panders to big bus and tour operations.

Access by snowmobile costs \$400-500/day because of guides and rental fees. Renting a private coach costs \$1,000. These costs do not improve access.

Diversity in the economies of gateway communities is the best way to ensure their viability and vitality.

i) Public Use of Public Parks

This is a public park and it should be dedicated to public use, because the environmental impacts of snowmobiles are almost negligible.

Parks are for the over-all tax paying public. They are not a preserve to benefit special interests (bus and tour operators) at the expense of the tax-paying public.

The between-season closures represent 3 months closure to the tax-paying public. This is attributed to lack of funds, but there is sufficient funding to keep the Park open for administration, research, etc.

j) Other

It takes 2-3 hours of skiing to get away from the noise of snowmobiles, so it's not worth my time to ski for 2/3 of each day listening to snowmobiles.

This seems more concerned with process than with content. No doubt what comes out will be a combination of Preliminary Alternatives.

It is wrong not to clearly identify the "snowcoach only" Preliminary Alternative as the one that has been determined three times to do significantly more than other Preliminary Alternatives to protect Park resources, attain "the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation", and "fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations."

It is discriminatory to allow access to non-snowmobilers but not to snowmobilers.

The acceleration in the rate of global warming will make snowmobile use a moot point soon.

Concerned that use of snowmobiles in the winter, when roads are shared with animals, exposes the animals to exhaust fumes.

The qualities of National Parks (peace and serenity) need to be distinguished from those of amusement parks, and new technologies should be excluded.

Support adaptive management of Winter Use as modifications become necessary in response to monitoring and in response to changes in demand for snowmobile access from various entrances.

Oppose access by snowmobiles to "wilderness"

Support cleaner snowmobiles and fuel efficient snowcoaches.

More attention should be paid to animals and trees than to industry.

Support the existence of the Parks to preserve and protect natural beauty and wildlife.

Support winter use decisions based on what's best for the park's integrity – air quality, wildlife impacts, etc.

Oppose decision-making that is dominated by one user-group

Support the winter closure of Sylvan Pass.

John Sacklin should not be in charge of this process because of the bias apparent in his view on a snowmobile hunting season.

Support the closure of routes for research/ecological purposes.

Wildlife, plants and trees should be first priority, then employee health and then impacts on recreationists.

Preliminary Alternatives 2, 3, and 6 may not be politically viable.

Winter access to Cave Falls needs to be part of planning.

Roads should not be plowed after the Gate closures. Administrative plowing that continues into December generates problems from resulting berms and windrows.

The 2002 Executive Order on Physical Fitness is best carried out by Preliminary Alternatives 1 and 2.

It is premature to make changes to the Temporary Plan. The NPS should continue to collect data before making changes to a plan that is working quite well.

Preliminary Alternatives 4, 5 and 6 are nothing but a consent to destroy the Park.

Superintendent Lewis needs to be at public meetings as much as possible in order to hear direct from average citizens as opposed to special interest groups such as Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Blue Ribbon Coalition etc.

Opposed to off-trail policy as to closure by persons leaving roads by skiing, snowshoeing, etc.

All government agencies should be doing their utmost to conserve fuel.

5) Questions raised by participants during Open House presentations

Bozeman Open House: March 14, 2006

What about the sound of Harleys in summer compared to the sound of snowmobiles in winter?

Will NPS have a Preferred Alternative in the DEIS?

What impact will public affordability play in this decision?

Provisions that would trigger re-evaluation and adaptive management responses for winter use?

Will there be on Alternative showing current use?

Do current snowcoaches meet Best Available Technology? Some are small and noisy.

Where is Cave Falls Road in all of this?

What are the changes to administrative costs if we change to no snowmobiles and no grooming?

Are the decisions about Sylvan Pass and Chief Joseph connected?

What about snowmobile trespassing especially in southwest Yellowstone National Park?

Why not increase snowcoach access so as to increase visitation to Yellowstone National Park?

Do you want help mixing and matching elements of these Preliminary Alternatives?

Where is the Organic Act in these Proposed Alternatives?

Is it NPS or the snowmobile industry that drives Best Available Technology?

Is there any comparison of summer impacts to winter impacts?

Might winter restrictions reflect potential future summer restrictions?

How many snowcoaches are there now?

Is part of the North Range to be closed? How do you define this Range?

Why is the NPS still involved in this?

Jackson Hole Open House: March 16,2006

Why are snowmobiles still being considered?

What is the impact of public input and public sentiment on this process?

How can NPS confirm that unguided snowmobiles are Best Available Technology?

Why are guides necessary?

Has NPS explored allowing non-Best Available Technology machines on Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail for linkage to USFS and other land?

What does “widest range of beneficial uses” mean? Is this the environmentally preferred alternative?

Where are skiers in these preliminary alternatives?

What is the rationale for limits on snowcoaches?

What's the energy use of snowcoaches compared to 4-stroke engine snowmobiles?

If snowcoaches are OK, can I go in with my personal snowcoach?

Do any alternatives include snowplanes?

Can we have a Preliminary Alternative that includes a way for us to certify ourselves for self-guiding?

Which Preliminary Alternative does the NPS prefer?

In Preliminary Alternative 4, why is there an increase from current levels?

Which Preliminary Alternative follows the Organic Act?

Can we have skier-only times during the winter? Can you include this in the analysis?

Have you considered a snow-bus system?

Can you assign a value to each vehicle?

END